

The Qualifications for a Pastor, Part 1: Noble Character, Part 1

Scripture: Titus 1:7

Code: 56-7

We're studying the book of Titus and this morning we continue in our series in verses 5 through 9 on the required character for a pastor. And I perhaps ought to say by way of brief introduction at least to you as a congregation, if not on the tape, that if I review a little bit and if I belabor a few points with which you are familiar, I want you to understand that I'm very concerned about this material in Titus chapter 1 because I want the Lord to use it in other churches and in the lives of other men in ministry across our country. I think there's a tremendous need to direct the church's attention back to the issue of who is qualified to minister. There are so many unqualified people in ministry today and because of that the church does not have the proper models that it should have for godliness and sanctification and righteousness and thus the church has descended to a low level of spiritual living.

I'm concerned that not only you understand these truths, but I am concerned that what I say, get on tape and get into the hands of people that are going to need to hear these things because they're at the point in their own life where they're evaluating whether they're suited for ministry and also these people who lead church pulpit committees and who select leadership for churches need to understand the nature of these standards and requirements. So I'm trying to be somewhat careful and thoughtful as I go through here and not assuming too much for the listener who may hear the tape or should it become something that's in print eventually, the person who might read it. And if I say things with which you're familiar, you'll understand that's the reason why.

I am concerned about this whole issue of church leadership. I'm concerned about the kind of person that is being allowed to preach in the pulpit, that is being allowed to minister the Word of God, that is being elevated to the point of pastorate or eldership in the church. I think we have to call the church back to evaluating these people on the basis of the standards that are explicitly given in Scripture. They're not oblique, they're not hard to understand, they're clear and they're very obvious both in Titus chapter 1 and 1 Timothy chapter 3 and a number of other places in the pastoral epistles to which we refer and allude as we go through even this text. So I want this series to speak to the church at large, as well as to our own church.

I also want you to know that the things that I'm covering here, the things that I'm talking about have been part and parcel of the life of Grace Church since I first came here. When I first came to Grace Church I obviously wanted to teach and preach the Word of God but I also wanted to pour my life into men to build men who would be men who could effectively minister as pastors and elders in the church. And from the very outset we set these standards and these principles down as the required

character for pastors and elders and have endeavored through the years to abide by these standards. And God, I believe, has blessed and God has honored His Word in that effort. I also want to say to you that the men who fit these standards and are therefore qualified for ministry do so not by their own talent but by the goodness and the grace of God who works in them to make them suitable for ministry.

Now having said that, let's look to Titus chapter 1 verses 5 to 9, and again part three in our study of the required character for a pastor. Some contemporary church leaders fancy themselves as business men, or media figures or entertainers or psychologists or philosophers or presidents, CEOs, lawyers. Yet those notions contrast sharply with the symbolism that Scripture employs to depict pastors and spiritual leaders in the church. For example, in 2 Timothy chapter 2 Paul uses seven different metaphors to describe a spiritual leader. He calls the minister a teacher, a soldier, an athlete, a farmer, a workman, a vessel and a slave. Each of those images evokes ideas of sacrifice and labor and service and hardship. They speak eloquently about the complex and varied responsibilities of spiritual leadership. And not one of those word pictures makes the ministry glamorous. That's because it's not supposed to be glamorous. Leadership in the church is not a mantle of status to be conferred on the church's aristocracy. It doesn't come by seniority. It isn't purchased with money. It isn't inherited through family ties. It doesn't necessarily fall to people who are successful in business or finance. It isn't doled out on the basis of intelligence or education or human talent. Its requirements are faultless character, spiritual maturity, a willingness to serve humbly and a skill in teaching. It may go to the rich, it may go to the poor, it may go to the bond, it may go to the free, it may go to those who are unknown in the world, it may go to those who are wellknown, it may go to those who have failed to be successful in an enterprise in life, at least as the world measures success, it may sometimes go to those that are very successful, but that has nothing to do with it.

Our Lord's favorite metaphor for the spiritual leader in the church was the one He used most often to describe Himself and that was shepherd...one who tends God's flock. Every church leader is a shepherd. That really does sum up what we do...feeding, leading, nurturing, caring, comforting, protecting, correcting...like a shepherd does his sheep.

Interestingly enough we should remind ourselves that shepherds are without status. In any given culture where shepherds exist they occupy the lowest...the lower rungs on the social ladder, don't they? Shepherds are lowly people. It is a semiskilled at best profession. In fact, you can replace a shepherd with a dog. I've seen dogs do a tremendous job of shepherding in New Zealand. So it's a semiskilled task, has no status, belongs to the low rungs of social ladders and that's fitting because the Lord Himself said, "Let him who is greatest among you become as the youngest and the leader as the servant," Luke 22:26.

God has ordained then that this be a role of humble service, loving service. The leaders are not called to be governing monarchs but humble slaves. They're not called to be slick celebrities but laboring servants, not called to be charismatic personalities, but faithful shepherds. The man who leads God's people must above all things exemplify sacrifice, devotion, lowliness and a love for and ability to communicate God's truth.

I think Jesus Himself gave us the pattern when He washed His disciples feet, doing something that only the lowest slave did, the dirtiest, filthiest most undesirable job there was, washing dirty feet. And Jesus did it and said that's how I want you to minister.

Now one great difference between spiritual shepherding and just plain ole shepherding is that plain shepherding is, as I said, semiskilled, a dog can do it to some degree. In biblical times you remember young boys did it. David was a young boy and typically young boys did the shepherding because it didn't take a lot of skill while the older men did the more difficult and complex tasks. But that's not true in the spiritual dimension of shepherding. Shepherding is not a semiskilled function spiritually, it's not for young boys, it's for mature men. It is not semiskilled, it takes a tremendous amount of skill. It is very very complex, it requires hard work, much wisdom. Not everyone can meet the qualifications and of those who do meet the qualifications, few seem to excel at it. Spiritual shepherding demands a godly and a gifted and a multiskilled man of integrity, one who can be a teacher and a soldier and an athlete and a farmer and a slave, a vessel and at the same time maintain the humility of a boy shepherd.

I suppose we would be safe in saying that many of the best known and most visible religious leaders utterly fail to measure up to the biblical standard and that is certainly a grief to the heart of the Lord of the church because as a result of inept shepherding you have a weak church. In fact, churches can survive almost every kind of problem except the failure of the shepherds. The shepherds can destroy their sheep and without the proper shepherds they go astray and are vulnerable.

Paul was passionately convinced that churches had to have the right kind of shepherds, the right kind of leaders. And all through his ministry he set about to see that this occurred. For example, back in the fourteenth chapter of the book of Acts he says we went in and evangelized and then we nurtured and then we appointed shepherds, elders, overseers, pastors. That was the pattern. Acts 14:21 to 23 sort of gives you in one little passage what Paul did everywhere...lead them to Christ, nurture them along the path of sanctification and give them leadership. That was Paul's passion. He knew that they had to have spiritual leadership. The sheep without a shepherd are scattered and devastated.

Now when you look at the New Testament you find three terms are used, as we've noted, for the shepherd or the pastor, terms elder, overseer and pastor. They're all interchangeable. For example, look at Titus for a moment right here in chapter 1 verse 5 and you will see the word "elders" there, Paul tells Titus to appoint elders. Then down in verse 7 he calls them overseers. He says the

overseer must be above reproach. He's using elder and overseer interchangeably. Elder speaks of the age and maturity of the man, overseer speaks of his function of leadership. You could add the word "pastor" which speaks of his function of feeding the sheep. In Acts 20 you also have the same use of those terms interchangeably. Paul is talking in verse 17 about the elders from Ephesus meeting him at Miletus. And down in verse 28 he tells them the Holy Spirit has made you overseers to shepherd. Elders are overseers who shepherd. Elder, overseer, pastor, all the same person. In 1 Peter chapter 5 you find it again interchangeably used, the word elders in verse 1 and then in verse 2 are to shepherd and exercise oversight. Elders are mature men who feed and lead the flock.

That's the simple plan of God for leadership in the church. Not a hierarchical thing, not a very complex structure. There isn't any kind of hierarchy that has developed, for example through years in the church particularly in Europe and more liturgical churches here, where you have pastors and then you have presbyters and then you have bishops and all of that kind of thing...that's all a fabrication of men that has no relationship to biblical terminology or design. Under the plan of God leadership is by men who are spiritually mature, who take the over the sight and shepherd and feed the flock. These men must exemplify spiritual virtue. Why? Because they are the models the people are following to spiritual virtue. We're not to be godly for our own sake alone, but for the sake that we might establish a pattern for others to follow.

The ministry then belongs to those who can meet by God's grace the qualifications. Not everyone can be an elder. Not everyone can be a pastor and an overseer. This office is reserved for qualified men who meet the character standards outlined in the text before us and also in 1 Timothy chapter 3 and a number of other places where you have glimpses of it in the pastoral epistles. The leadership of the church calls for teaching, it calls for preaching, obviously of sound doctrine. It calls for decision making. It calls for determining church policy. It calls for careful stewardship of all funds. It calls for protecting and defending the flock, for disciplining sin, for praying, ruling, organizing, ordaining other leaders, exhorting, rebuking. In general, all that responsibility belongs to some very skilled and gifted and called and prepared men. And again I want to say, it is by God's grace that such men exist. We cannot achieve this level. Our giftedness comes from God's Spirit and whatever we are before God in terms of righteousness and virtue is by God's grace and God's grace alone.

Now in Crete the churches had been around for a long enough time to have started having problems. It doesn't take very long and they were beginning to have some problems. In fact, there was some confusion over doctrine in these churches in Crete. We know that in chapter 1 verse 9 the elder is to hold fast the faithful Word and he is to exhort with sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict. So obviously in the island of Crete, that island of 160 miles in length where there were a hundred cities at least, according to the ancient writers, there were churches all over the place. They were young, they still needed a lot of work, verse 5 says there were things that still had to be set in order and straightened out. But mostly they needed leadership. Why? Because there was unsound doctrine being taught and somebody had to come in to that situation, contradict the wrong things and

teach sound doctrine. Chapter 2 verse 1, Paul says to Titus, "Speak the things which are fitting for sound doctrine." Over in chapter 3 verse 9, "Shun foolish controversies, genealogies, strifes and disputes about the law. They're unprofitable and worthless."

Obviously all of this was going on in the church, false teaching, false doctrine. Verse 10 even talks about a factious man could be even a heretical man who is teaching perverted things. So these churches were feeling the effect of error being taught and they needed men who could step to the leadership and teach sound doctrine with authority. There were also false teachers who were the ones purveying the error and verse 10 talks about rebellious men, empty talkers, and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision coming from Judaism and wanting to hold to its legalistic principles. There were people who were, verse 14, teaching Jewish myths, commandments of men, turning people away from the truth. Over in chapter 3 as I noted, a factious or heretical man is to be warned twice and then he is to be rejected completely because he's perverted and is sinning and is self condemned because of it. They were having to deal with some personalities here, not just the issues of doctrine but some people that were teaching error.

To add to that, the pagan culture had invaded the church. Look at chapter 1 verse 12, it says that one of their prophets said Cretans are liars and evil beasts and lazy gluttons. But these people, this characterized all of Cretans, some of these people who lived like that had infiltrated the church. Down in verse 16, these are people who profess to know God but by their deeds they deny Him, they are detestable, disobedient, worthless for any good deed. Over in chapter 2 verse 12 Paul says we have been instructed by the grace of God to deny ungodliness and deny worldly desires and live sensibly, righteously, godly in the present age because in verse 14 God has sought to redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself a people of His own, zealous for good works.

So the pagan culture had invaded the place and there were people involved in lusts and sins and evil things. That needed to be dealt with. So on the one hand it required teachers who could teach sound doctrine. Leaders who could refute false teachers. People who could confront sin, discipline sin, deal with sin. And that all to counter the invasion of pagan culture.

And then there was some general leadership. Look at chapter 2 for a moment and you'll see in the beginning of chapter 2 verse 2 older men, verse 3 older women, verse 4 young women, verse 6 young men, bondslaves, masters. Now what you have here is order of all the various groups in the church being dealt with. The older women, the younger women, the older men, the slaves, the masters, the whole structure of the church...everybody needed to be taught what they were to do. That's oversight. That's leadership. That's what an episkopos, or an overseer does. So there was the need to teach sound doctrine, the need to confront false teachers, the need to deal with an invading pagan culture and to bring everybody into a proper understanding of what their role in the church was. And then the overarching process of just moving all these people towards sanctification was absolutely critical. In verse 14 of chapter 3 he kind of wraps up by saying, "Let our people learn

to engage in good deeds, to meet pressing needs that they may not be unfruitful." In other words, if you're going to be evangelistic you've got to live a godly, virtuous, holy life. So the point was for the sake of evangelism as well, all of this needed to be dealt with.

Now that's the reason Paul says to Titus in verse 5, "Appoint elders in every city." You can't accomplish these things without leadership. And you know as well as I do that if Titus had just shown up and hadn't had a letter from Paul and said, "All right, you guys, we're going to pick some elders in this church," somebody would have said, "I'd like to nominate Bill because he's got a lot of money and he's very successful and he's over a lot of people and he can organize like crazy." And somebody might stand up and say, "Well I'd like to nominate my husband, he's really a wonderful guy and I think he ought to be on this group of elders, too, and besides, we'd like to know what's really going on on the inside of this deal." And somebody else might stand up and say, "Well I know this guy over here, he's very erudite, he's well read, he's highly educated, we'd like to choose him." And just to make sure that kind of free for all didn't happen, the Apostle Paul gets this letter to Titus that he can hold in his hand and say, "Here is the Godinspired criteria and it has nothing to do with popularity and has nothing to do with money and it has nothing to do with success, education or whatever."

Titus then is armed, as it were, with the data in verses 5 to 9 for the selection process that he must accomplish in these various churches. He's got to do it fast because in chapter 3 verse 12 Paul says he wants him to come to Nicopolis as soon as Artemas or Tychicus arrived to take his place.

Now the qualifications are explicit and nonnegotiable. Let me begin in verse 6 and remind you of them. Namely, "If any man be above reproach, the husband of one wife, or better, a one woman man, having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion, for the overseer must be above reproach as God's steward, not selfwilled, not quick tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sorted gain, but hospitable, loving, what is good, sensible, just, devout, self controlled, holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching that he may be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict." There shouldn't be any vaguery about that, it is absolutely crystal clear the kind of man that is suited for this ministry. And the overarching concept that really defines everything is the statement in verse 6 and verse 7 that this man must be above reproach, it is repeated twice, as it is repeated also in 1 Timothy chapter 3. It means there's no cause for criticism of his life, no cause for criticism of his character, no mark, no blight, no issue of sin, no defect that in any way makes his credibility as the example and the teacher of divine truth suspect. He is to be the model of spiritual life to which the others desire to attain. His unrepachable character, his blameless character makes him suitable and unique and specifically set for this kind of work.

Now I told you that over all above reproach falls into four categories. We already looked at the first one, sexual morality, which appears in the statement, a onewoman man. The pastor must be one whose life exemplifies God's ideal of one man, one woman for life...not only maritally but morally.

Faithful to his wife if indeed he is married, devoted, loyal, loving, faithful.

And then we looked secondly and last week at the second issue of family leadership. It says also in verse 6 he is to be a man who has children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion. That's a very important message from last week because some people have wanted to say this phrase "having children who believe" should be translated "having faithful children," and all it means is they're obedient, they don't have to be Christians, they don't have to be believers, they just have to be obedient. And I tried to show you last time that that's not what the text is saying. And the New American Standard translators have translated it accurately, "Having children who believe." The word *pistos* which is from the word *pisteuo*, to believe, is used over 60 times in the New Testament. Sometimes it is translated "faithful," sometimes it is translated "believing," but it always when referring to persons other than God or Christ refers to a Christian. No one who is a non believer is ever said to be faithful. It refers to those who believe in the gospel and are thus called faithful.

Those who believe in God and are thus called faithful...it is used to refer to God, the faithful Creator, to refer to Christ the faithful High Priest, several times of God, several times of Christ. It is used to refer to the faithful Scripture, that is that it is loyal and trustworthy, to the truth. But the most frequent usage of it is to people and in searching through the whole New Testament, every single use of the word, I can't find any use that doesn't refer to a believer. You could sum up the meaning of the word "faithful" in Acts 16:15 with the phrase, "faithful to the Lord." To be faithful means to be faithful to the Lord.

Let me give you an illustration. What does it mean to have a faithful child? Having a child who is faithful? Having a faithful child? That same phrase is used in 1 Corinthians 4:17 to refer to Timothy and there it says Timothy is a faithful child. What is a faithful child? Not an obedient child only, but a loyal child, loyal to the faith, a believer such as Timothy. First Corinthians 4:17 says, "Timothy is a faithful child," that is he is my son who is a believer and faithful to what he believes. Revelation 17:14 sums up by saying believers are the called and chosen and faithful.

Furthermore, just looking at it from a logical standpoint, apart from the Word itself, if it said the children only have to be faithful but not Christians, would anyone consider the child of a pastor faithful if they were obedient but rejected the gospel? No matter what they did in terms of their obedience, they would be considered by all as unfaithful at the most crucial point, the point of the faith. No matter what the children might have been faithful to, if they were not faithful to the Christian gospel and believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, they would be considered unfaithful children, disobedient to God who commands us to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and disobedient to their father who called them to Christ as well.

Furthermore, they're not just to be believing but they are to be faithful because they are not accused of dissipation or rebellion. By the way, as I noted last time, those are things adult children do, not little children, so he's likely speaking about adult children here who have reached the point of saving faith. First Timothy 3 seems to emphasize the smaller younger children who have a simple faith, accepting what their father teaches, who are obedient, who are under control. And their simple faith ultimately emerges into a saving faith. So this is a very unusual individual who by God's grace and God's sovereign purpose and plan has believing children.

There's a fourth category that we will look at in the future and that's in verse 9, and that has to do with his teaching skill...sexual morality, family leadership and number four is teaching skill, we'll look at that in the future, the fact that he must hold fast the faithful Word and be able to teach and all of that. But for this morning I want us to look at the third in these four categories, and we'll just call it general character general character, verses 7 and 8. The overseer must be above reproach as God's steward and here comes the general characterization...first there are five negatives and then there are six positives...not selfwilled, not quick tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sorted gain, but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self controlled. The man who is marked by these qualifies is a man who has the general character to go along with the family leadership, to go along with the sexual morality, to go along with the teaching skill that equips him for this task. The man who is marked by these qualities, by the way, will have power, he will have power...not only the power of God because of the holiness of his life, but credibility, honor, respect, admiration, love and all that will endow him with authority and power to lead. He will be the man who can effectively lead the church.

Now let's look at the beginning of verse 7 and see how he opens up the section on general character, "For the overseer," there's that word again, it's used five times in the New Testament, four times of pastors, once of Christ, and when it's used of Christ in 1 Peter it's translated guardian. That's a great word. We are guardians, pastors are the teachers and the feeders but also the guardians. It comes from the word episkopos, the middle of that word, skop is the word from which we get skeptic in English, where you look and search and you examine everything very closely...we say someone is skeptical and we mean by that that they're very analytical and they want to look everything over very carefully, and you add the epi at the beginning, the preposition, and you get this kind of man who is over and looking into everything. That's an overseer, that's a guardian, paying close attention. It was used to describe the gods who kept watch over the people and over their nations. And then it was used to describe those religious leaders who represented those gods and watched over religious communities. And then it moved into the Christian church and it was used of those who ruled the church.

In 1 Thessalonians the verb proistemi is also added to it to have charge over. So here are these people who are watching over and looking over and guarding the church and they're in authority over it as the delegated authorities of Christ. They are to rule, 1 Timothy 5:17 says, they are to rule well.

Hebrews 13 says they're in charge, 1 Thessalonians 5 says they're in charge. And these men who have this responsibility, says verse 7, must be above reproach. Verse 6 says if any man be above reproach, verse 7 adds the word must, it is a necessity. It is not an option, it is a necessity. Why? Because he is responsible to lead the flock of God as God's steward and to lead that flock to the kind of life that God wants which must be the kind of life that he exemplifies.

It's a frightening standard for me, for anyone who stands in this particular responsibility. He is not able to be accused. He is not able to be laid hold of because of some scandal or sin that mars him. On the contrary, he is a man without reproach who can establish a pattern that others can follow. That little phrase "as God's steward" is very important...very important. A steward was *oikonomos* in the Greek, he managed the house...*oikos* is the word house. He set the law for the house, *nomos* law, *oikos* house. He was the law of the house. He didn't own it, he was a steward of it. He managed it. He managed the people, he managed the resources. He made sure the work got done, he made sure the crops were in, he made sure the food was stored. He made sure the people were fed. He made sure the servants did all the right tasks, that the right allotment of work was sorted out among the people who could serve. He took care of those who needed to be corrected. He took care of those who needed to be changed. He took care of those who were wounded or ill. He managed the house. That was what a steward did.

And if you look back to 1 Timothy it's very important to note this. In 1 Timothy chapter 3 and verse 15, Paul says to Timothy, "I'm writing so that you may know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God." Timothy, I'm writing so you'll know how someone is supposed to exercise his stewardship, his managing role, his oversight in the household of God. And Paul is saying the church is a household, it's God's household, He owns it. The children are His children. They belong to Him, but your responsibility is to manage it for Him, all the resources, all the people blending their giftedness, feeding them proper diet of spiritual truth, correcting them, disciplining them, caring for them, loving them, restoring them. You need to manage the household of God. That is also why back in verse 5 of chapter 3 Paul says to Timothy, "If a man doesn't know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God." Because it is a household, it is God's household. That's why I said last time that the family is the proving ground for the ability to manage God's household. We are stewards, we don't own it, it doesn't belong to us. We are directly answerable to God and it is required of stewards, 1 Corinthians 4:2 says, that a man be found...what?...faithful, trustworthy. In 1 Peter 4:10 it says that we are stewards, good stewards of the manifold grace of God. We are dispensing God's grace to the household of God. We manage for God His household, just like a steward managed a household for a land owner. It's a very very sacred task because the Lord paid a high price for this household, didn't He? He purchased it with His own blood, Acts 20 says, verse 28. The church is not mine, the church is not yours, the church is His. We are not our own, we are bought with a price, 1 Corinthians 6:19 says, Hebrews 13:17 says I have to give an account to God for how I watch over your souls. This is a stewardship from God...a serious responsibility for which I will be accountable when I face the Lord. And that accounting will

happen.

Now, God then is looking for people sexually pure, who have demonstrated the ability to lead a household to salvation, to sanctification and to service and have demonstrated they can handle all of the resources and they can feed and nurture and care for that household. I think that's why the Lord said if you can't handle money, why would I give you souls? If you can't prove that you can handle the mammon, then why would I give you the true riches? That's why I think Jesus said if you're faithful over little, I'll give you much. Spiritual leadership belongs to those who have proven that they can manage their own household and thus are given the task of managing the household of God. They must then be men who take the oversight and who exercise it with impeccable character.

Now let's go back to Titus and see the specifics of that character. And we're just going to get barely started because we're already out of time...isn't that terrible? There are two things here just to mention, and I've already alluded to them. Verse 7 gives a list of negatives, verse 8 gives a list of positives. There are five negatives, there are six positives. Now the simple way to understand this is to take two points. Point one, what a pastor must not be. Point two, what a pastor must be. It's that simple...what a pastor must not be, verse 7, what a pastor must be, verse 8.

In verse 7 you have a listing of the kind of things that must be absent in this man's life. And at least let's get started. Number one, this man is not selfwilled...not self willed. An interesting word, very strong word in the Greek. It means to have a selfloving arrogance. It means to be literally consumed with yourself, seeking your own way, your own satisfaction, your own gratification to the point, of course, that you disregard others. We might say this is a headstrong person, this is a selfseeking person. We might even say this is a stubborn person.

False teachers, by the way, are described in the same terms in 2 Peter 2:10 as being daring and selfwilled and they don't even tremble when they revile angelic majesties. They're so arrogant and so daring and bold in their arrogance and so self willed that they will tread where angels fear to tread. They don't have the sense to even realize the powers they're dealing with in the power of darkness. There's a certain egotism that makes them so arrogant that nothing stands in their way, they have no regard for the authority or the power of any other.

You see, it's important to say this because in the world's system the first thing people look for in looking for a leader is somebody who is a strong aggressive natural leader. And very often the SNL, as he is called, the strong natural leader, is just the opposite of the kind of person that should lead effectively in the church. It doesn't mean he's not strong, it doesn't mean that this man should be without convictions, we'll get to that. But very often the man who leads in the church is selected because of his strong natural leadership ability and what drives it is not concern for God and truth but what drives it is a sense of ego fulfillment...a need to be in charge. And when things don't go the way the guy wants them to go, it's very frustrating for him and everybody else. No one who is dominated

by self is fit for this kind of task. You have to examine your heart all the time on this one. I'm always kind of laughing when some young man in the ministry asks me how did I finally reach true spirituality...or as one young man put it one time...when did you finally become humble? And as soon as I answered him, I'm not humble anymore, you know, so it's a Catch 22 question, as soon as you just announced your humility, you lost it. We all fight this. We all fight the battle of the flesh and selfwill and selfdesire...but a man who is to be a leader in the church is a man who is not selfwilled, he has to continually suppress his own desires, the desires of his flesh, desires for his own selfglory and selfgratification. He must not despise others because they get in his way, the way of fulfilling his own desires.

No one dominated by self is fit for this task. This is the kind of person the world chooses. And I think Jesus said it as well as it could be said in Matthew chapter 20 in verse 25 he said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them." In the pagan world they always pick people who dominate them. They're always looking for a leader and leadership to them means power and authority and dominance. And He says their great men exercise authority over them but it is not so among you. Whoever wishes among you to be a leader, let him be your servant, Matthew 20:25. So the man who is chosen for this role of leadership must not be a selfwilled man. He has to give space for other people and other people's leadership and direction. Most of all he seeks out to know the mind and the heart of God and to do only what he would desire done in his church.

Secondly, and this goes along with it, he says in verse 7 he's not to be quick tempered. Recently I was talking to some people from a church and they were telling me the problems of this church and didn't know how to resolve them. And I said, "Well look, obviously you're very upset with your pastor. What is it about your pastor that causes you such concern?" And they said he gets angry all the time. I said, "He gets angry? Well what do you mean?" Well in a meeting he'll just blow up and then he'll stomp out of the meeting. What should we do?

And the right answer, of course, was you should get another pastor because he's not qualified...not quick tempered. That word quick tempered is used only here, orgilon, though its cognates are frequent, the word orge from which the word wrath, anger comes, a smoldering kind of anger that resides under the surface. Everybody is going to lose it now and then a little bit and get upset about something. I mean, that can happen in your life time. We all have to face the reality of that. But this is talking about a person with what we would call a temper, that's always under the surface and at given points it just erupts. It's this...it's this sort of constant lasting nurtured hostility maintained in the heart and periodically it bursts out. It's probably behind what Paul said to Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:24 when he said the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome, but kind and patient when wronged and putting up with evil graciously. And when things don't go the way he wants them to go, that's all right, that's fine, that's okay.

And James really sums it up. Anger produces nothing of value, absolutely nothing of value in spiritual leadership. James 1:20, "The anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God...the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God." Man of God will not be angry, he will not be hostile, he will not be quarrelsome, he will not be fuming on the inside because he's not getting his way, that is not an appropriate man for spiritual leadership. He is a man who can take a no, he is a man who can be set aside and another man's decision can preempt his. He is a man who can turn things over to other people who do in ways that he might not think are best and he is a man who can deal with that with joy in his heart and gratitude and kindness and patience. He is a man who can allow people around him to fail until they learn to succeed because he doesn't tie his ego up in everything they do.

Well let me just mention a third one and we won't discuss it because it opens up a whole different issue. He says this man is to be not addicted to wine...not addicted to wine. That's a tremendous word. That word is paroinos and it literally is the word oinos, wine, and para, alongside. Not someone who is alongside wine. Now we're getting a little more specific about this man's life style. He's a man who is humble and unselfish and a man who is patient, kind and not easily angered. And if he does get angry, he gets angry about the things that make God angry, that's righteous indignation. And he's a man who is literally not alongside wine. To find out exactly what that means, we're going to have to wait cause our time is gone. We're also going to learn a few more things about what he's not to be and then we'll go in to verse 8 and cover what he is to be. I'm not sure we'll be able to do that next Sunday morning, we'll see with our communion service. If not we'll have to put it off until the next time we can get back to this text.

Father, we do thank You this morning for Your Word and for this time and this lesson. Although we didn't finish this first section and hoped we would have been able to do that, You know and perhaps what was said was needful and will be helpful to our dear folks here and many others elsewhere in the future. Father, we are not fit for such a task except by Your grace. It is Your grace and Your power and Your mercy that has preserved me and any who fit these qualifications from besetting sins and scandalous sins that could cause our life to bear a reproach. It is Your grace that has gifted us. It is Your grace that has called us. Your grace that has done it all. We thank You for that preserving grace, that sustaining grace, that grace that has kept us from the great transgression, as the psalmist called it, which put such a mark on life that ultimately this spiritual leadership is not possible. Thank You for that preservation. Thank You for all those men in our church and in churches elsewhere who fit the qualifications, who are the kind of men You want in Your church, giving it leadership. Thank You for those men.

And we pray, O God, that You might keep them pure, and keep them holy and keep them faithful and keep their families faithful. And that You might raise up more generations of such men who can step into the leadership of the church not because they're humanly talented, but because they're spiritually qualified, that Your church might be led by those kinds of leaders who can lead us to Christ's

likeness. I thank You for men like that in my life who set the pattern for me to follow and I pray that there may be many more in generations to come. We thank You for the young men even now who are training at the Master's Seminary who to this point are qualified and they meet those standards. And, Lord, I pray that You'll keep them there and that You'll preserve them and protect them in the days ahead that they might know and experience the fullness of a life of effective ministry, that they might become patterns for others to follow, that they being like Christ might be His true representatives. We thank You for the instruction You've given us and what yet awaits us as we study this rich book in Christ's name. Amen.

Available online at: <http://www.gty.org>

COPYRIGHT (C) 2014 Grace to You

You may reproduce this Grace to You content for non-commercial purposes in accordance with Grace to You's Copyright Policy (<http://www.gty.org/connect/copyright>).